

St Mabyn CofE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112018
Local Authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	289148
Inspection date	7 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Paul Sadler

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	77
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Hyde
Headteacher	Daphne Puttock
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002
School address	St Mabyn Bodmin PL30 3BQ
Telephone number	01208 841307
Fax number	01208 841307

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a rural community in north Cornwall. It is organised into three classes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is about average. At the time of the inspection there were no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and none who spoke a language other than English at home.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. To quote a parent, 'We couldn't find a better school, no matter how much money we were to spend'. Pupils start school with average skills and abilities and make good progress in the Foundation Stage, by the end of which almost all attain the goals set for children of their age, with many exceeding these levels. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and at the end of Year 2 they attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are a little above average. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain above-average standards in English, mathematics and science. They produce thoughtful and accurate written work, for instance, when studying the Victorian era, and are confident users of information and communication technology (ICT). The school meets the ambitious targets which it sets itself.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school's Christian ethos promotes excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' behaviour too is excellent. Older pupils care for younger ones and report that there is very little bullying. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and take full advantage of the many opportunities for sport and exercise. They also make outstanding contributions to the community, both in school and more widely through participation in village and local events. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy school but some parents are too ready to withdraw them for family outings and holidays.

Pupils' good achievement is the result of good teaching. In spite of the wide range of ages and abilities in some classes, effective assessment leads to work which is planned well to meet each pupil's needs. Children in the Foundation Stage have an appropriate mix of activities that prepares them well for their future learning. Sometimes, a relaxed approach to the timing of activities slows the pace at which pupils learn. The curriculum is good, with an excellent range of additional activities which pupils enjoy greatly. Good use is made of the local environment and of educational trips and visits, such as in a study of the River Camel by Years 3 and 4. Pupils receive good care, guidance and support and are given very good academic guidance based on teachers' knowledge of their progress. Child protection procedures are effective, but staff knowledge of current requirements is not as up to date as it should be.

The school has benefited from a long period of stability in leadership and management, hence an effective team provides good leadership at all levels. The Foundation Stage is well led and subject leadership is good. Teaching staff are supported well by very experienced and well-qualified teaching assistants and administrative staff, who provide excellent support. The school has a good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and the latter are addressed effectively. The governing body is effective in supporting staff and holding them to account. Rightly, the school is researching more effective and efficient ways of monitoring and managing the impact of its planning decisions. Improvement since the last inspection has been significant and the school is undoubtedly well placed for improvement to continue.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all staff are familiar with current requirements concerning the safeguarding of children.
- Increase the pace of learning in some lessons by giving pupils clear guidance about the amount of work they are expected to complete.
- Improve pupils' attendance by taking steps to minimise unnecessary absence.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 6 attain standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. A particularly good feature is that they make equally good progress in all classes and subjects of the curriculum. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most can read and write a simple sentence and can use numbers to 10 with confidence. By the end of Year 2, many pupils can write a story using paragraphs and speech marks. By Year 4, they use ICT with confidence, for instance, using computer programs to develop their skills in mental mathematics or by using a digital camera to record their work. By Year 6, many attain above-average standards in art, physical education, drama and music as well as in English and mathematics. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. The school's close links with the parish church are used very well, for instance, when pupils performed a play they had written about the life of Saint Mabena in preparation for a later performance at a local religious festival. Pupils have a very good understanding of the United Kingdom's cultural diversity, enhanced by visits and displays. Their behaviour around school is excellent and is exemplified by care and consideration for others and by good manners. Pupils say they enjoy school, especially the wide range of additional activities and educational visits. Their attendance is satisfactory. On occasion, some parents keep their children away in order to attend events, sometimes without informing the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, for instance, when using the Internet or when playing. Their contribution to the community is outstanding as they give performances of music and drama at a number of local events and festivals, and have won a number of awards. The skills pupils will need in adult life are developing very well, especially in the use of ICT and in cooperation and teamwork.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good in all classes. Teachers use a variety of methods to maintain pupils' interest and use assessment well to plan work that is appropriate for them. ICT is used very well to help both teaching and learning. Teaching assistants provide very good support, especially for the youngest children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Expertise among the staff, and from external sources, is used well to ensure that teachers have good subject knowledge. Marking is very effective and helps pupils to know how to improve their work. On a few occasions, pupils are given too much time to carry out a task, or are allowed to work too slowly. This reduces their progress in these lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good as children are able to learn in a variety of ways using a good range of resources. At present the lack of a covered outside area limits some of their opportunities but the school has plans to address this. Older pupils study a wide range

of subjects, including French and drama. The school is beginning to make links between subjects to improve their relevance to pupils and to develop their skills across all aspects of the work. Pupils from the mixed-age classes complain that sometimes the same resources are reused, but acknowledge that the work becomes progressively more challenging. This small school provides an outstanding range of additional activities, including sport, music, activities such as cookery and chess, and a wide range of educational visits.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for its pupils very well as they and their parents are well known to staff. Staff have pupils' welfare uppermost in their minds and are very aware of the principles of child protection, but they have not had recent training and some are unfamiliar with current requirements. Pupils receive very good academic guidance because their progress is tracked accurately and they are given targets and guidance on how to improve. A Year 1 pupil, for instance, knew her targets were 'to use capitals, full stops and finger spacing', and Year 6 pupils know well what they need to do to attain high levels in national tests.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at all levels are good. Teachers are well trained in their responsibilities and work very well as a team to ensure that they provide high quality education. The school is effective in monitoring and evaluating its work and has identified and pursued areas in need of improvement, such as pupils' writing and the provision of a covered outdoor area. Leaders and managers are rightly seeking more efficient ways of planning and monitoring the school's progress that reduce the amount of paperwork for staff and governors. The school has good links with its partners, such as the pre-school playgroup, the local secondary school and the church. Routine management is very efficient, largely through the efforts of the excellent administrator. Staff, including teaching assistants, have very good opportunities for training and professional development; for instance, a higher level teaching assistant was recently invited to promote the qualification in other schools in Cornwall. Staff give very freely of their time, enabling activities such as residential experiences for Years 3 to 6 to take place. The Foundation Stage is well led, links with parents being especially good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, for instance, in the quality of marking, and the governors and experienced team of staff are well placed to carry out further improvements.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 June 2007

Dear Pupils

St Mabyn C of E School, St Mabyn, Bodmin, Cornwall PL30 3BQ

I very much enjoyed talking and listening to you and seeing your work when I visited your school recently. I want to thank those of you who took time to talk to me. I especially enjoyed attending your assembly and seeing your play about Saint Mabena. I am sure your performance at the festival went well.

You and your parents are right to believe that your school is a good one. These are some of the best things about it:

- You make good progress in your work and reach above-average standards by the time you leave Year 6. You are very good at using ICT.
- You behave excellently, get on very well together and help each other. You told me that when bullying occasionally happens, the staff deal with it well.
- You know how to keep healthy and safe, and about the importance of exercise and a healthy diet.
- You are taught well. Teachers know what you need to learn and all the staff help you to learn quickly.
- You are taught interesting things which make good use of living in a lovely part of Cornwall. You told me you enjoy all the trips and clubs for older pupils.
- You are well cared for by the staff and feel you can talk to them about problems. You are given targets you understand and which help you to improve your work.
- The staff and the governors lead the school well.

I have asked the school to improve a few things. While the staff are very good at caring for you, they need some training on all the laws and rules about this. In some lessons, I have asked teachers to make sure you know how much work you are expected to complete and how much time you have to do it in. Some of you are sometimes kept off school to do things with the family, so I have asked the school to explain in more detail why you should always come to school unless you are ill.

Thank you again for your help, and good luck in the future.

Mr Paul Sadler Lead Inspector